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The United States is in dire need of more Border Patrol agents to enforce policies against illegal immigration and drug smuggling. Under current law, the INS is authorized to add a total of 5,000 additional border agents at a rate of 1,000 per fiscal year from 1997 to 2001.

We have not met our goals. The INS has only recruited between 200 and 400 new agents because salaries and the recruitment skills have not been up to par.

My legislation will increase the salaries and work harder at retention, and salute those men and women who serve us very ably at the border. It is time now to give more respect to our border agents.

Madam Speaker, I rise to the floor of the House today to stand up for a group of men and women who guard our nation's borders and risk their very lives everyday. The group of men and women whom I am referring to are the United States Border Patrol. Today, along with my colleague from Texas, Mr. REYES, I introduce the "Border Patrol Recruitment and Retention Act of 1999."

This legislation will provide incentives and support for recruiting and retaining Border Patrol agents. This legislation would increase the compensation for Border Patrol agents and allow the Border Patrol agency to recruit its own agents without relying on personnel officers of the Department of Justice or INS.

The United States is in dire need of more Border Patrol agents to enforce policies against illegal immigration and drug smuggling. Under current law, the INS is authorized to add a total of five thousand additional border patrol agents, at a rate of five thousand additional border patrol agents, at a rate of one thousand per fiscal year from 1997 to 2001. However, INS did not request any additional agents in its FY 2000 budget due in large part to the lucrative job market and the low unemployment rate.

According to Commissioner Meissner of the INS, only 200 to 400 new agents will be hired this year. Arizona had been slated to receive approximately 400 of the full complement but will not likely receive between 100-150, and my home state of Texas, which would have received approximately 500 new agents this year, could see that number cut by more than half.

The "Border Patrol Recruitment and Retention Enhancement Act" would move Border Patrol agents with one year's agency experience from the federal government's GS-9 pay level (approximately \$34,000 annually) to GS-11 (approximately \$41,000 annually) next year. We need better recruitment and better retention. We cannot play with the nation's borders, and right now in the Immigration and Claims subcommittee in which I am a Ranking Member, we listen to testimony hearing after hearing about how the Border Patrol agents need more money, and the INS needs to be given the resources to be able to do it. This legislation is the step in that direction.

Madam Speaker, we are a nation of immigrants and a nation of laws. The "Border Patrol Recruitment and Retention Act of 1999," will give us the ability to control our borders and uphold the law. I urge my colleagues to join me and Mr. REYES, who is our resident expert on Border Patrol matters due to his service as a Border Patrol Sector Chief to support this much needed measure.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

REGARDING LATEST SHOOTING IN ATLANTA

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HASTERT. Madam Speaker, the latest shooting in an Atlanta school is deeply troubling. My wife is a teacher in a public school. My kids have gone to a public school. I taught for a lot of years in a public school.

I fervently believe that every child deserves to learn in a good school and in a safe environment. But how can we create such an environment if it is the children themselves who make the schools unsafe?

Clearly, we need to tighten current laws to make it more difficult for kids to get guns. We will take a look at the measure passed by the Senate to make sure that it is a reasonable and common sense approach.

We also need to more effectively enforce the laws that are already on the books and to prosecute those who break the laws. But these measures will fall short if we do not effectively address the deeper problems that face our society and our children.

Our children need to learn the differences between right and wrong. They need moral instruction. They need a culture that reinforces positive values that help create a safer and more secure society.

It is more difficult to be a parent today. We feel the need to work harder just to keep pace with the neighbors. All too often, parents are forced to worry first about their jobs and then about their kids. And it is becoming more and more difficult for parents to monitor what their kids are watching, hearing, and learning.

I support free expression, but there is a point where unbridled free expression undermines a free society. I challenge the entertainment industry, the Internet industry, the video game industry, and the media to become good corporate citizens. Monitor the material that flows to our kids.

I applaud the Disney Company for taking some steps in the right direction, but the whole industry must join in the cause. Keep casual gunplay out of the movies. Keep hate music out of

the music stores. Keep bomb-making web sites off the Internet. Do not make video games so violent that they warp young minds.

Free expression does not necessarily have to lead to moral chaos. Let us join together in finding ways to help parents raise their children to be good productive citizens.

GOD BLESS AMERICA'S VETERANS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Madam Speaker, I have the privilege of representing the Third District of North Carolina. The Third District covers most of the eastern part of the State, including five military bases: Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station, New River Marine Corps Air Station, Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, Elizabeth City Coast Guard Station, and Camp Lejeune Marine Corps Base.

In eastern North Carolina we are also proud to be the home of 77,000 thousand of our Nation's 25 million living veterans. Madam Speaker, these are the men and women who courageously served to protect this country and preserve the principles that it was founded upon.

Out of respect and appreciation, we must ensure the sacrifice these brave soldiers made is something we never forget and that the vital role they play in this country's history remains as unmistakable as our commitment to their continued well-being.

As President Abraham Lincoln said in his Second Inaugural Address: "Let us care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan."

This statement is said to reveal the government's promise to provide lifetime health care for our veterans and their families, a promise that many of my colleagues in Congress and I continue fighting to fulfill.

Madam Speaker, today I am here to share with my colleagues good news, to tell them of two successful efforts by the government to provide our Nation's veterans with the health care that they need and deserve.

Two weeks ago I had the pleasure of attending the dedication of a new community-based outpatient clinic in Jacksonville, North Carolina. For the veterans of Onslow County, this is a tremendous victory and the result of a great deal of work and determination.

It has been a priority of mine for some time to find a way to see that a satellite facility was built in eastern North Carolina. For too long, many veterans were forced to travel to Fayetteville, North Carolina or Durham, North Carolina to reach the closest VA hospital.

Madam Speaker, as my colleagues can see, we were in desperate need of health care services that were more accessible to the veterans of eastern